

to make an idiosyncratic and personal music that avoids flamboyance and jettisons embellishment. "Nothing" features in the title of each of these six tracks, which are pared back to a point where only essentials seem to remain. Bell-like harmonics; shimmering bowed metal; the muted clatter of a typewriter; liquid whistling; the rattle of a distant train; the wavering halo of a moistened wineglass. De Asís actually delivers music that is far from parsimonious. In terms of unexpected timbres, textures and nuanced coloration these are gentle yet generous compositions offering a stream of satisfying disclosures.

#### Marc Mellits

##### *Smoke*

Innova CD/DL

There is a distinctly retro feel to these four pieces, written by Chicago based Marc Mellits and performed with evident relish and dexterity by New Music Detroit. That threadbare term postminimalism seems not only meaningful but entirely credible and useful when applied to *Smoke*. Mellits weaves a seductive fabric, glistening and bright, rhythmically buoyant and flexible yet heavy with compact melodic hooks. Beyond their crisp efficiency, the ensemble, which includes brilliant electric guitarist Gyan Riley, communicate levels of engagement and exhilaration that often bring to mind the urbane self-assurance of Peter Gordon and David Van Tieghem's Love Of Life Orchestra, or the youthful exuberance of The Lost Jockey in the heyday of the so-called postminimal. All deeply familiar in one way or another, yet Mellits clearly makes this music not as an exercise in borrowed style but out of first-hand creative necessity. And it works.

#### Wolfgang Mitterer

##### *Beethoven/Mitterer: Nine In One*

Col Legno CD/DL

"Beethoven was in error," John Cage notoriously proclaimed in a talk at Black Mountain College. The Romantic composer's pervasive influence has had a deadening effect on music, he went on. Decades later the cover of this release by Austrian composer Wolfgang Mitterer asserts, "You really can listen to Beethoven!" Mitterer has crafted an hour-long mash-up of Beethoven's nine symphonies. Those canonical snippets are performed orchestrally but sutured together with patches of electronics and threads of electric guitar. The outcome is an uneasy hybrid and an unresolved dilemma.

#### Charlemagne Palestine

##### *Aa Schmmmeetrrrrroospppecccccitive*

audioMER LP + Pbk

"Bösendorfer at its best was a very noisy, thick molasses piano," Charlemagne Palestine once told me, lamenting the preference of contemporary piano manufacturers for bright, percussive sonorities. This recording, made by

Palestine in his New York Tribeca loft around 1974, features his own beloved Bösendorfer. It holds no radical departures or fundamental surprises for listeners already acquainted with the pianistic body art of his *Strumming Music*. The defining alternation technique is once again sustained with formidable intensity, generating clouds of pummelled sound that hang in the air like heady perfume. Devotees of Palestine will take delight in the accompanying book, a lavishly illustrated catalogue prepared for his current exhibition at the Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels. It celebrates his unapologetically sensual dedication to sublime excess, while photographs enshrine the host of soft toys that serve as household deities and artistic guardians in his eccentric mythology.

#### Marianne Schuppe

##### *Nosongs*

Edition Wandelweiser CD

Basel resident Marianne Schuppe has on past occasions applied her finely controlled yet warmly communicative voice to interpretation of music by Feldman and Scelsi. The 11 tracks on *Nosongs* are restrained without being austere, somewhat repetitious in terms of melody and cadence yet sufficiently varied overall. Lapping against her voice, swelling and fading among the words are sonorous arcs that radiate briefly from an electronically bowed lute. Like abstract shapes in a figurative painting, they are integral to the composition and cast mysterious shadows around Schuppe's already enigmatic verbal articulations. Her combination of accuracy and elusiveness, intimacy and distance may also bring to mind Samuel Beckett's most radically reductionist prose works, pure constructions infiltrated by the impure world of given things.

#### Julian Skar

##### *Exhaust/Renew*

Aurora CD

A member since 2008 of Oslo's Ensemble neoN, Julian Skar has also been active as a multimedia artist and in the field of music theatre. *Exhaust/Renew* is, however, his debut release as composer. Although the title hints at a programmatic vision of natural or creative cycles Skar doesn't settle for facile or obvious options. There are four manifestations of this piece. Pianist Ingrid Andsnes is a constant and central to all: a solo, a trio with cello and violin, a septet and finally piano plus sinfonietta. Skar's compositional approach is audibly steeped in the forms and dynamics of electroacoustic music. Their translation into more standard instrumental language is impressively dramatic and tense. Some of the credit for this is due to the imposing decisiveness of Andsnes. Strings, wind instruments and percussion impinge upon her fractious, splintered phrasing and flinty attack with entropic slurs, ominous rattling and wavering drift. □

## Noise, Industrial & Beyond

by Tabitha Pisenso

#### Hekla

##### *Á*

Phantom Limb DL/LP

Hailing from Iceland, Hekla Magnúsdóttir began working with theremin through improvisations based on her own graphic notations. Two years later this album came together and shows a versatility and range with the instrument that is rarely demonstrated. Hovering under airy, echoing vocals in Icelandic, it spans through a spectrum of low-end drone to undulations of high-pitched shrieking. Wails from the theremin this long and seething become cinematic, whether looming over a desolate, dystopian, sci-fi landscape in the intro track "Hatur" or the short lamentation "Slit". On "Heyr Himna Smíður" carefully orchestrated notes evoke a resounding cathedral organ. Combined with her ethereal vocals, the album delicately explores unfamiliar terrain with uncanny finesse.

#### Victoria Keddie

##### *Cannibal Mecanique*

In Context Music DL/7"

Invested in analogue signal processing – the majority of which comes from a combination of real-time multichannel video mixing and the filming of live choreographed performances – Victoria Keddie compiled an enormous array of cameras, monitors, projections and electronics to create and record an immersive installation involving choreographed movement for performers. This two track single is an audio document of the process, demonstrating how specific and variable composition can become when left to the devices of audio and live video signals routing through one another: a noisy ballad that hisses, pulses and grinds in unseemly contortions, its pacing only capable by coaxing bizarre assemblages produced by body and machine communicating with one another.

#### Novi\_sad

##### *International Internal Catastrophes*

No label CD

Novi\_sad is the moniker for Thanasis Kaproulias, and this album represents a soundtrack assembled for a film project made with Isaac Niemand. Together, the two brought their interests in the relationship between architecture and sound for an exploration of cinematic sound production and landscape phenomena. Split into two parts, the

soundtrack features one section composed of 2012 field recordings from Iceland; the other is assembled from 2007 recordings from Manhattan and Brooklyn bridges, and then produced in Athens on the night of the 2008 riots following the murder of student Alexandros Grigoropoulos. The result is a broiling assembly of gritty rumbles and the sound of wind resonating through monumental structures overlaid with tones that retain a sense of awe at being on the precipice of something tenuous.

#### Colin Potter

##### *The Where House?*

Dark Entries LP

Originally released in 1982 through his label ICR (Integrated Circuit Recordings), this production by Potter registers as a singular amalgamation of its time. It's heralded as some of the earliest work to experiment with abstract synthesis and heavy percussive electronics, and then genre-bent through minimal, krautrock, synthpop and dark ambient. Notwithstanding precedents like Conrad Schnitzler's 1978 *Con*, Tangerine Dream's *Rubycon* and Monoton's *Monotonprodukt*, this LP's industrial overtones and neurotic tempos anticipate contemporary techno. From the macabre vibratos oscillating through "The State" to the chopped and screwed horror of "Away From The Public Eye", the way Potter upends categorical definitions is unparalleled for its time.

#### RAN

##### *Şeb-i Yelda*

Karlırecords DL/12"

Culled from Persian literature, the title *Şeb-i Yelda* refers to *The Longest Night*. This release is Istanbul born, Berlin based artist Hüma Utku's homage to a narrative by the Ottoman poet Sabit Efendi. Through "Ay" ("Moon"), "Sabah" ("Morning"), "Kul" ("Servant") and the title track, the music monitors transitions from night to day, love to grief. Layers of deep tones – drawn out and augmented with recordings from Istanbul, traditional instruments like tambur and piano, and subtle vocal work – create a devastatingly solemn atmosphere for introspection and reflection.

#### Skrima

##### *Tapes*

Disasters By Choice DL/LP

Between 1981–83 Skrima made a set of recordings in and around his home in Sicily – a clamouring refrigerator from the 1960s, faulty lights, opera voices from the 1981 film *Diva* picked up from a distant television, wind and rumbling captured in crevices of an active volcano in Stromboli. During the following three years he added effects and slight instrumentation – defective keyboards, bass and an EKO Multitone. Subtle processing is key here, enabling Skrima to time travel through the emotive, lulling sounds of Sicily, close to four decades ago. □